Catalogue no. 89-621-XIE — No. 001
ISSN: 1719-7376
ISBN: 0-662-43444-7

Analytical Paper

Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada

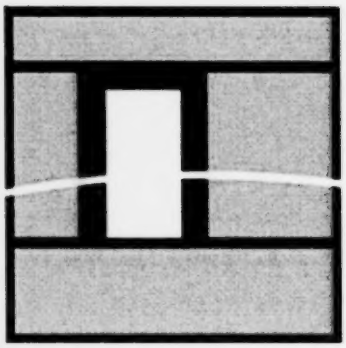
The Chinese Community in Canada

2001

by Colin Lindsay

Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division
7th Floor, Jean Talon Building, Ottawa, K1A 0T6

Telephone: 613-951-5979



Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

2008-03256/

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 (telephone: 613-951-5979).

For information on the wide range of data available from Statistics Canada, you can contact us by calling one of our toll-free numbers. You can also contact us by e-mail or by visiting our website at www.statcan.ca.

National inquiries line	1-800-263-1136
National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired	1-800-363-7629
Depository Services Program inquiries	1-800-700-1033
Fax line for Depository Services Program	1-800-889-9734
E-mail inquiries	infostats@statcan.ca
Website	www.statcan.ca

Information to access the product

This product, catalogue no. 89-621-XIE, is available for free in electronic format. To obtain a single issue, visit our website at www.statcan.ca and select Publications.

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable, courteous, and fair manner. To this end, the Agency has developed standards of service that its employees observe in serving its clients. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.ca under About us > Providing services to Canadians.

Statistics Canada
Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division

Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada

The Chinese Community in Canada

2001

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2007

All rights reserved. The content of this electronic publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, and by any means, without further permission from Statistics Canada, subject to the following conditions: that it be done solely for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary, and/or for non-commercial purposes; and that Statistics Canada be fully acknowledged as follows: Source (or "Adapted from", if appropriate): Statistics Canada, year of publication, name of product, catalogue number, volume and issue numbers, reference period and page(s). Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, by any means—electronic, mechanical or photocopy—or for any purposes without prior written permission of Licensing Services, Client Services Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

March 2007

Catalogue no. 89-621-XIE
ISSN 1719-7376
ISBN 0-662-43444-7

Frequency: Occasional

Ottawa

Cette publication est disponible en français sur demande (nº 89-621-XIF au catalogue).

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

Symbols

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

Table of contents

Acknowledgements **6**

Highlights **7**

Introduction **8**

The Chinese Community in Canada **9**

A growing community 9
The majority are foreign-born 10
Most live in two provinces 10
Most live in Vancouver or Toronto 11
A young population 11
Slightly more women than men 12
Most do not report a religious affiliation 12
Most can converse in an official language 12
Family status 13
Few live alone 13
Over one in four has a university degree 13
Employment trends 14
More likely to work in scientific and technical fields 15
About as likely to be unemployed 15
Incomes 16
One in four with low incomes 17
Most feel a sense of belonging to Canada 17
Summary table 18

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Target Groups Project of Statistics Canada. This report is part of a series of profiles which will include profiles of the East Indian, Filipino, Haitian Jamaican, Japanese, Korean, Lebanese and Vietnamese communities in Canada, as well as profiles of Canadians of African, Arab, Caribbean, Latin American, South Asian and West Asian origins. For more information on this series or to order print copies of this profile or any of the other profiles in this series, contact the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage at 1-888-77MULTI 1-888-776-8584 or 819-953-1970. The report is also available free of charge on the Statistics Canada website at: http://www.statcan.ca

For questions or comments about the content of this report, please contact Statistics Canada at 613-951-2603; fax 613-951-0387 or e-mail lindcol@statcan.ca.

Highlights

- At just over one million people, the Chinese community was the largest non-European ethnic group in Canada in 2001.
- 72% of Canadians of Chinese origin were born outside of Canada.
- The large majority, 72%, live in either the Toronto or Vancouver census metropolitan areas.
- 85% can carry on a conversation in at least one official language, while 15% cannot converse in either English or French.
- 56% of Canadians of Chinese origin said that they have no religious affiliation. This group represents 13% of all Canadians who are not affiliated with any religion.
- Chinese (all dialects combined) is the third largest mother tongue in Canada, after English and French.
- In 2001, 56% of adults of Chinese origin were married, while just 2% lived common-law.
- At the same time, only 5% of adults in the Chinese community live alone, compared to 13% of all adult Canadians.
- 31% of men and 24% of women of Chinese origin have a university degree.
- 8.4% of Chinese labour force participants were unemployed in 2001.
- The average income of Canadians of Chinese origin was $5,000 lower than the national average of $30,000 in 2000.
- 27% of children of Chinese origin live in families with incomes below the low-income cut-offs.
- The majority (74%) of senior women of Chinese origin who live alone have incomes that fall below the low-income cut-offs.

Introduction

This report describes the basic social and economic characteristics of people in the Chinese community in Canada. It is part of a series of profiles of the country's major non-European ethnic groups.

The information in this profile is taken mostly from the 2001 Census of Canada, the most recent source of census data. Statistics Canada conducts the Census every five years. One in five households receives a long questionnaire that asks household residents to indicate the ethnic or cultural origins to which their ancestors belonged. This profile is based on people who reported they had Chinese origins. People could list Chinese as the only ethnic or cultural group of their ancestors, or list the origin along with other ethnic or cultural origins.

This publication also uses information from the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), which was conducted in 2002 by Statistics Canada in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The EDS surveyed more than 42,000 Canadians over the age of 15. The objectives of the EDS were to understand more about how people's backgrounds affect their participation in Canadian society, economy and culture, and how Canadians from different ethnic backgrounds report and describe their ethnicity.

Although the EDS and the Census provide very useful information, caution should be exercised in making direct comparisons between groups, particularly as they relate to causal implications, because the data have not been adjusted to take into account differences in age, education, length of time in Canada, and other factors.

This profile is based on the Census population, which includes the following groups:

- Canadian citizens (by birth or by naturalization) and landed immigrants with a usual place of residence in Canada (including those who are abroad, either on a military base or attached to a diplomatic mission; or who are at sea or in port aboard merchant vessels under Canadian registry).
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada who are claiming refugee status and members of their families living with them.
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada who hold:
    - a student authorization (student visa or student permit);
    - an employment authorization; or
    - a Minister's permit (including extensions);
    - and members of their families living with them.

For the purposes of this profile, the term "Canadians" includes all persons with a usual place of residence in Canada, regardless of their citizenship status.

The Chinese Community in Canada

A growing community

Canadians of Chinese origin[1] make up the largest non-European ethnic origin in Canada. In fact, the Chinese community is the 5th largest of any ethnic origin in Canada other than English or French. In 2001, there were just over one million people of Chinese origin living in Canada. That year, they represented approximately 4% of the total Canadian population.

Table 1
Selected ethnic groups in Canada, other than English, French and Canadian, 2001

	Total population (in thousands)	Multiple responses (in thousands)	Single responses (in thousands)	As a percentage of the total Canadian population
Scottish	4,157.2	3,550.0	607.2	14.0
Irish	3,822.7	3,325.8	496.9	12.9
German	2,742.8	2,037.2	705.6	9.3
Italian	1,270.4	544.1	726.3	4.3
Chinese	**1,094.7**	**158.4**	**936.2**	**3.7**
Ukrainian	1,071.1	744.9	326.2	3.6
Dutch	923.3	607.1	316.2	3.1
Polish	817.1	556.7	260.4	2.8
East Indian	713.3	131.7	581.7	2.4

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

The Chinese community in Canada is also growing considerably faster than the overall population. Between 1996 and 2001, for example, the number of people who said they had Chinese origins rose by 19%, while the overall population grew by 4%. As a result, the proportion of Canadians of Chinese origin increased from 3% to 4% of the total population in this period.

The large majority of people in Canada of Chinese origin say they only have Chinese origins. In 2001, 86% of all those who reported Chinese origins said they had only Chinese roots, while 14% said they also had other ethnic origins. In contrast, almost 40% of the overall Canadian population has multiple ethnic origins.

1. All statistical information in this publication referring to Chinese, the Chinese community, Canadians of Chinese origin or people of Chinese origin denotes those who reported Chinese origins either alone or in combination with other origins in response to the question on ethnic origin in the 2001 Census or 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey.

The majority are foreign-born

A substantial majority of the Chinese population living in Canada was born outside the country. In 2001, 72% of Canadians of Chinese origin were born outside of Canada, compared with 18% of all Canadians. Close to 45% of foreign-born Canadians of Chinese origin were born in the People's Republic of China, while approximately 30% were born in Hong Kong and almost 10% were from Taiwan.

The majority of immigrants of Chinese origin arrived in Canada relatively recently. In 2001, 52% of ethnic Chinese immigrants had arrived in the previous decade and another 25% had arrived between 1981 and 1990. In contrast, only about 5% had arrived in the 1960s, and just 2% came to Canada before 1961.

Most live in two provinces

The Chinese community in Canada is highly concentrated in Ontario and British Columbia. In 2001, 82% of people who reported Chinese origin lived in one of these two provinces. Ontario was home to 47%, while another 34% lived in British Columbia.

That year, there were over a half a million people of Chinese origin living in Ontario, while another 374,000 resided in British Columbia. At the same time, there were smaller Chinese communities in other provinces including almost 110,000 in Alberta and 63,000 in Quebec.

Table 2
The Chinese population in Canada, by province and territory, 2001

	Total Chinese population (in thousands)	As a percentage of the provincial/territorial population	As a percentage of the total Chinese population in Canada
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.1	0.2	0.1
Prince Edward Island	0.2	0.2	0.0
Nova Scotia	3.7	0.4	0.3
New Brunswick	2.1	0.3	0.2
Quebec	63.0	0.9	5.8
Ontario	518.6	4.6	47.4
Manitoba	14.2	1.3	1.3
Saskatchewan	9.3	1.0	0.8
Alberta	108.1	3.7	9.9
British Columbia	373.8	9.7	34.1
Yukon	0.3	1.0	0.0
Northwest Territories	0.3	0.8	0.0
Nunavut	0.0	0.2	0.0
Canada	**1,094.7**	**3.7**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

Chinese people account for a particularly large share of the population in British Columbia. In 2001, Canadians of Chinese origin accounted for 10% of the total population of British Columbia. The same year, they represented 5% of Ontario's population and 4% of that in Alberta. In all other provinces and territories, the Chinese community represented 1% or less of the total number of residents.

Most live in Vancouver or Toronto

The large majority of Canadians of Chinese origin lives in either the Toronto or Vancouver census metropolitan areas. In 2001, 72% of all Chinese people lived in one of these two urban areas. That year, Toronto was home to 436,000 Chinese Canadians, while another 348,000 lived in Vancouver. In fact, the Chinese community represents a large proportion of the total population of these two cities. In 2001, people of Chinese origin made up 18% of all Vancouver residents and 9% of those in Toronto. At the same time, they made up 6% of residents of Calgary, 5% of those in Edmonton, 4% of those in Victoria, and 3% of those in the National Capital Region. In contrast, in other Canadian cities, people who reported Chinese origins made up 2% or less of the total population.

The trend for Chinese people to concentrate in Toronto and Vancouver is also likely to continue in the future as recent immigrants have tended to settle in these two census metropolitan areas. For example, Toronto and Vancouver CMAs accounted for over 80% of the growth in the Chinese population in Canada between 1996 and 2001.

A young population

Canadians of Chinese origin are somewhat more likely than the overall population to be young adults in their prime working years, while they are somewhat less likely to be either seniors or approaching retirement age. This reflects the fact that a large proportion of Canadians of Chinese origin are relatively recent arrivals in Canada. In 2001, 33% of the Chinese community was aged 25 to 44, compared with 31% of the total Canadian population. At the same time, 15% of the Chinese community, versus 13% of those in the overall population, were aged 15 to 24. In contrast, seniors aged 65 and over made up only 10% of the Chinese community, compared to 12% of all Canadians. Similarly, 22% of the Chinese community were aged 45 to 64, about 2% less than the figure for the overall population.

Table 3
Age distribution of the Chinese community and overall Canadian population, 2001

	Chinese community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Age group						
Under 15	20.3	18.9	19.6	20.2	18.6	19.4
15 to 24	16.6	14.2	15.3	14.0	13.0	13.4
25 to 44	32.4	34.4	33.4	30.4	30.6	30.5
45 to 64	21.7	22.4	22.1	24.4	24.4	24.4
65 and over	9.0	10.0	9.5	10.9	13.4	12.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total population (in thousands)	**529.4**	**565.3**	**1,094.7**	**14,564.3**	**15,074.8**	**29,639.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

Slightly more women than men

As with the overall population, there are slightly more women of Chinese origin living in Canada than men. In 2001, 51.7% of the Chinese community were female, compared with 50.9% of all Canadians. As well, like their counterparts in the overall population, women over the age of 65 make up a majority of seniors of Chinese origin. That year, 54% of people aged 65 and over of Chinese origin were women. In the overall population, women made up 56% of seniors.

Most do not report a religious affiliation

The Chinese community is significantly different from the rest of the population when it comes to religion in that the majority of Canadians of Chinese origin reports that they have no religious affiliation. In 2001, 56% of Chinese people aged 15 and over said they had no religious affiliation, compared with 17% of the overall population. As a result, Canadians of Chinese origin represented 13% of all Canadians who are not affiliated with any religion, whereas they made up 4% of the overall population. Among Canadians of Chinese origin with a religious affiliation, 14% were Buddhist, another 14% were Catholic and 9% belonged to a Protestant denomination.

Most can converse in an official language

The large majority of Canadians of Chinese origin can converse in one of Canada's official languages.[2] In 2001, 85% could carry on a conversation in at least one official language, while 15% could not converse in either English or French. Most, 78%, could converse in English, while 1% could converse in French, and 6% could carry on a conversation in both English and French.

While most Canadians of Chinese origin can speak at least one official language, the large majority have a mother tongue[3] other than English or French. In 2001, 85% of the Chinese community said that their mother tongue was a non-official language. In almost all cases, they said their mother tongue was a Chinese-origin language such as Cantonese and Mandarin. In fact, Chinese, including all dialects, is the third largest mother tongue in Canada after English and French.

The majority of Canadians of Chinese origin also speaks a language other than English or French at home. In 2001, 63% of people who reported Chinese origin said that they spoke only a non-official language in their home, while another 4% said that they spoke another language in combination with either English or French at home.

At the same time, almost one in five Canadians of Chinese origin who are employed speaks a language other than English or French on the job. In 2001, 18% of all Canadians of Chinese origin with jobs spoke a non-official language at work most often. Another 4% regularly used a non-official language combined with English or French on the job. At the same time, though, 77% of employed people of Chinese origin spoke only English at work, while 2% spoke either French only, or both English and French.

2. English and French are recognized as Canada's official languages in the *Official Languages Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
3. A mother tongue is the language that a person learns first in childhood and that they still understand.

Family status

Canadians of Chinese origin are more likely than other Canadians to be married. In 2001, 56% of people aged 15 and over in the Chinese community were married, compared with 50% of all Canadian adults. In contrast, people of Chinese origin are less likely to live in a common-law relationship. That year, 2% of adults of Chinese origin were living common-law, compared with 10% of all Canadian adults.

Table 4
Family status of the Chinese community and overall population aged 15 and over, by sex, 2001

	Chinese community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Married	57.9	54.8	56.3	51.0	48.3	49.6
Living common-law	2.1	2.3	2.2	10.0	9.4	9.7
Lone parent	1.6	6.8	4.3	2.1	8.7	5.5
Child living at home	26.2	21.0	23.5	19.0	14.0	16.4
Living with relatives	3.0	6.2	4.6	1.9	2.6	2.3
Living with non-relatives	3.9	3.3	3.6	4.7	3.3	4.0
Living alone	5.3	5.6	5.4	11.3	13.7	12.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

Canadians of Chinese origin are also less likely than other Canadians to be lone parents. In 2001, 4% of adults of Chinese origin were lone parents, compared to 6% of adults in the overall population. In both the Chinese and overall populations, the large majority of lone parents are women. In the Chinese community, women represented 82% of all lone parents in 2001, while the figure in the overall population was 81%.

Few live alone

Canadian adults of Chinese origin are less likely than other Canadian adults to live alone. In 2001, 5% of the Chinese community aged 15 and over lived alone, compared to 13% of all adult Canadians. Seniors of Chinese origin are especially unlikely to live alone. That year, 10% of people of Chinese origin aged 65 and over lived alone, compared with 29% of all seniors in Canada. On the other hand, seniors of Chinese origin are more likely than other seniors to live with members of their extended family. In 2001, 16% of seniors of Chinese origin lived with relatives, such as the family of a son or daughter, while only 5% of all Canadian seniors lived with relatives.

Over one in four has a university degree

More than one quarter of Canadian adults of Chinese origin have a university degree. In 2001, 27% of Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over had either a bachelor's or post-graduate degree, compared with 15% of the overall adult population.

Table 5
Educational attainment of the Chinese community and overall Canadian population aged 15 and over, by sex, 2001

	Chinese community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Less than high school	27.9	32.2	30.1	31.4	31.1	31.3
High school graduate	10.5	12.4	11.4	13.1	15.1	14.1
Some postsecondary	12.9	11.6	12.2	10.7	11.0	10.8
Trades certificate/diploma	5.0	3.8	4.4	14.1	7.8	10.9
College graduate	9.7	12.0	10.9	12.5	17.3	15.0
University certificate/diploma below bachelor's degree	3.4	4.2	3.8	2.1	2.9	2.5
Bachelor's degree	20.3	18.1	19.1	10.6	10.6	10.6
Post-graduate degree	10.2	5.9	7.9	5.4	4.2	4.8
Total with university degree	30.5	23.9	27.1	16.0	14.9	15.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

Canadians of Chinese origin are particularly likely to have a post-graduate degree. In 2001, adults of Chinese origin made up 3% of the overall Canadian population, but represented 9% of all those with a Doctorate and 7% of those with a Master's degree.

Canadians of Chinese origin also represent a high proportion of those with degrees in highly technical fields. In 2001, people of Chinese origin made up 6% of all university graduates in Canada, while they represented 12% of those with degrees in mathematics, physics or computer science, and 11% of those in engineering or applied science.

As in the overall population, men of Chinese origin have somewhat more education than women of Chinese origin. For example, 31% of men of Chinese origin had a university degree in 2001, compared to 24% of their female counterparts. However, women of Chinese origin are considerably more likely than other women to have a university degree. In 2001, 24% of women of Chinese origin were university graduates, compared to 15% of all Canadian women.

Young people of Chinese origin are more likely than other young Canadians to be attending school. In 2001, 76% of the Chinese community aged 15 to 24 were enrolled in a full-time educational program, compared to 57% of all Canadians in this age group. Among young people of Chinese origin, men and women are equally likely to attend school full-time. This contrasts with the overall population, in which young women aged 15 to 24 were more likely than young men to be in school in 2001.

Employment trends

Canadian adults of Chinese origin are somewhat less likely to be employed than adults in the overall population. In 2001, 56% of adults of Chinese origin aged 15 and over were employed, compared with 62% of all Canadian adults. This reflects in part the fact that a relatively large proportion of the Chinese population in Canada are recent arrivals who in many cases are still adjusting to life in this country. Indeed, Canadians of Chinese origin who have been living in Canada since 1981 have a higher employment rate than the overall population.

Table 6
Percentage of the population employed, by age group and sex, 2001

	Chinese community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			percentage			
Age group						
15 to 24	34.5	40.0	37.1	56.1	55.6	55.9
25 to 44	78.6	66.7	72.3	85.6	75.2	80.3
45 to 64	72.1	56.2	63.8	74.8	60.8	67.7
65 and over	9.9	4.7	7.0	13.0	4.8	8.4
Total	**59.9**	**51.5**	**55.5**	**67.2**	**56.1**	**61.5**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

As with the overall population, men of Chinese origin are somewhat more likely than their female counterparts to be employed outside the home. In 2001, 60% of men of Chinese origin aged 15 and over were part of the paid workforce, compared with 52% of adult women of Chinese origin. However, both men and women of Chinese origin were less likely to be employed than their counterparts in the overall population.

More likely to work in scientific and technical fields

Canadians of Chinese origin make up a high proportion of all Canadians employed in scientific and technical occupations. In 2001, people who reported Chinese origins made up 3% of all workers, while they represented 7% of people employed in the natural and applied sciences. People of Chinese origin also represent a relatively high proportion of those employed in business, financial and administrative positions, as well as in manufacturing. At the same time, their representation in other occupational groups such as health and education was proportionately lower.

Canadians of Chinese origin are also about as likely as those in the overall workforce to be self-employed with an incorporated business. In 2001, people of Chinese origin, who represented 3% of the total Canadian workforce, made up 4% of self-employed people who owned an incorporated business. In contrast, the representation of Canadians of Chinese origin among unincorporated self-employed workers was relatively low.

About as likely to be unemployed

Unemployment rates among labour force participants[4] of Chinese origin are similar to those for the general population. In 2001, 8.4% of Chinese labour force participants were unemployed, compared with 7.4% of those in the overall population.

As in the overall population, young people of Chinese origin are more likely to be unemployed than older adults. This is especially true for young men. In 2001, 18% of male Chinese labour force participants aged 15 to 24 were unemployed, compared with 14% of all young Canadian

4. Adults (aged 15 and over) who are employed, or who are unemployed and looking for work.

men in this same category. At the same time, 15% of young female Chinese labour force participants were unemployed, compared to 13% of their counterparts in the general population.

Incomes

In 2000,[5] the average income from all sources for Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over was about $25,000, compared to almost $30,000 for all Canadian adults.

Table 7
Average incomes of the Chinese community and overall Canadian population, by age group and sex, 2000

	Chinese community			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
			dollars			
Age group						
15 to 24	8,113	7,789	7,955	11,273	9,046	10,182
25 to 44	34,357	24,790	29,340	40,450	26,306	33,308
45 to 64	36,577	23,969	30,191	46,955	26,767	37,026
65 and over	21,293	15,647	18,247	30,775	19,461	24,437
Total	**29,322**	**20,974**	**25,018**	**36,865**	**22,885**	**29,769**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.

As in the overall population, women of Chinese origin have lower incomes than their male counterparts. In 2000, the average income for adult women of Chinese origin aged 15 and over was just under $21,000, while for men it was $29,000. However, the income gap between women and men of Chinese origin is somewhat smaller than the gap in the overall population. That year, the average incomes of Chinese women were 72% those of their male counterparts, whereas the figure in the overall population was 62%.

Canadian seniors of Chinese origin also have relatively low incomes. In 2000, the average income from all sources for Canadians of Chinese origin aged 65 and over was $18,000, about $6,000 less than the income for all seniors, whose average income was $24,400. As with all seniors in Canada, women aged 65 and over of Chinese origin have lower incomes than their male counterparts. That year, the average income for senior women of Chinese origin was $15,600, compared with $21,000 for senior men of Chinese origin.

Canadians of Chinese origin receive about the same share of their income from earnings[6] as does the overall population. In 2000, Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over said that 79% of their income came from earnings, compared with 77% for all Canadian adults. At the same time, Canadian adults of Chinese origin received a slightly smaller proportion of their total income from government transfer payments than other adults. That year, 10% of the income of Canadians of Chinese origin aged 15 and over came from government transfers, while the average for all Canadian adults was 12%.

5. In the Census, people report their income for the previous year.
6. Includes wages and salaries and net income from self-employment.

One in four with low incomes

Just over a quarter of all Canadians of Chinese origin have incomes that fall below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs. In 2000, 26% of the Chinese population in Canada had incomes below these official low-income cut-offs, compared with 16% of the overall population. As well, a relatively large share of Chinese children live in low income families. That year, 27% of Chinese children under the age of 15 lived in a situation considered to be low income, compared with 19% of all children in Canada.

Unattached Chinese adults are particularly likely to have low incomes. In 2000, 55% of Chinese people aged 15 and over living on their own had low incomes, compared 38% of their counterparts in the overall population.

Chinese seniors living on their own are particularly likely to have low incomes. In 2000, 70% of unattached Chinese people aged 65 and over had incomes below the low income cut-offs, compared with just 40% of all seniors living on their own. As with the overall population, unattached senior Chinese women are the most likely to be classified as having low incomes. Indeed, almost 3 out of 4 of these women (74%) had incomes below the low income cut-offs that year, compared with 59% of unattached senior Chinese men and 43% of all women aged 65 and over.

Most feel a sense of belonging to Canada

According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey, a large majority of Canadians of Chinese origin feel a strong sense of belonging to Canada. In 2002, 76% of those who reported Chinese origins said they had a strong sense of belonging to Canada. At the same time, 58% said that they had a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic or cultural group.

Canadians of Chinese origin are also active in Canadian society. For example, 64% of those who were eligible to vote reported doing so in the 2000 federal election, while 60% said they voted in the last provincial election. As well, about 35% reported that they had participated in an organization such as a sports team or community association in the 12 months preceding the 2002 Ethnic Diversity survey.

At the same time, though, over one in three (34%) Canadians of Chinese origin reported that they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on their ethnicity, race, religion, language or accent in the past five years, or since they arrived in Canada. A majority (63%) of those who had experienced discrimination said that they felt it was based on their race or skin colour, while 42% said that the discrimination took place at work or when applying for a job or promotion.

Summary table

	People of Chinese origin			Total Canadian population		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total population (in thousands)	529.4	565.3	1,094.7	14,564.3	15,074.8	29,639.0
Percentage change between 1996 and 2001	18.0	19.5	18.8	3.7	4.1	3.9
Percentage immigrant	70.3	73.6	72.0	18.0	18.7	18.4
Percentage with Canadian citizenship	80.4	80.1	80.2	94.9	94.5	94.7
Language						
Percentage able to speak English/French	87.9	83.0	85.4	98.8	98.2	98.4
Percentage speaking only non-official language at home	62.9	64.0	63.4	9.6	9.9	9.7
Age distribution						
Percentage aged less than 15	20.3	18.9	19.6	20.2	18.6	19.4
Percentage aged 25 to 44	32.4	34.4	33.4	30.4	30.6	30.5
Percentage aged 65 and over	9.0	10.0	9.5	10.9	13.4	12.2
Family status						
Percentage lone parents[1]	1.6	6.8	4.3	2.1	8.7	5.5
Percentage living alone[1]	5.3	5.6	5.4	11.3	13.7	12.5
Percentage seniors living alone	5.7	14.3	10.4	16.8	38.3	28.9
Education, employment and income						
Percentage with university degree[1]	30.5	23.9	27.1	16.0	14.9	15.4
Percentage employed[1]	59.9	51.5	55.5	67.2	56.1	61.5
Unemployment rate	8.2	8.6	8.4	7.6	7.2	7.4
Percentage with low income	25.8	26.1	25.9	14.7	17.7	16.2

1. Includes people aged 15 and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada.